

# **Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Tangible Structure, Facility or Educational Program**

**Project Number:** 1207-12\_L

**Date: 28 February 2008**

**Title:** Buckroe Beach Saltwater Fishing Pier

The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws and regulations related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, administering the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament program, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

## **A. Project Purpose**

### **1. Does the project meet statutory guidelines for funding?**

Yes. The project's major contribution will be to provide much needed saltwater fishing access for a wide range of participants, including the handicapped. The educational potential the city proposes will be an additional benefit. Prior to the demise of the Buckroe and Grandview piers, participants in the Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program (a project funded by RFAB) tagged large numbers of fish, particularly flounder, from these piers. Recapture information from flounder provided considerable new information regarding their movement (or lack thereof) during the warm weather months.

### **2. Does the project fulfill a real need and/or provide a substantial benefit to the saltwater recreational fishery?**

The project will provide needed access for large numbers of saltwater shorebound (boatless) recreational anglers. Due to its proximity to deepwater, the pier, as described, will offer a quality angling experience and offer shorebound anglers access to certain species, such as cobia and Spanish mackerel, not typically encountered by this group.

### **3. Does the project provide its main, or substantial, benefits to the saltwater recreational angler?**

The overall project, clearly yes. The money requested from the RFAB will provide borderline amenities, however, the over riding benefit of the project, increased access to a quality saltwater fishing experience, makes this project extremely beneficial for recreational anglers.

## **B. Project Analysis**

### **1. What are the project's strengths?**

Access for the angling public to a quality saltwater fishing experience and a strong financial commitment by the city of Hampton. The city has done its homework with regard to siting the pier near deepwater. The old Buckroe Pier occupied a similar footprint and was renowned as an excellent fishing destination. The total estimated cost of the pier and its amenities is \$2.8 million and the request to the RFAB is \$500,000, or slightly less than 20% of the project's total cost. The City of Hampton will not purchase a saltwater fishing license for the pier, so all anglers over the age of 16 and under 65 will be required to possess a saltwater fishing license, which should increase license revenue. The city plans to have insurance for the pier, which further justifies the spending of license monies. The proposed construction (no detailed description or drawings were provided) suggests the proposed pier will be very similar to the new pier located in Norfolk, at Ocean View, which is a first rate structure.

### **2. What are the project's weaknesses?**

There are no real weaknesses to this project as proposed. However, some details were not included. First, the budget provided is general in nature and hardly "detailed," as specified in the RFAB guidelines. Half of the request from the RFAB is for "site work," and no additional details are provided. The remainder of the RFAB request is for "structures on the pier," such as restrooms, snack bar, and bait shop. The actual pier structure is only loosely described, in fact conflicting statements in the proposal indicate the T at the end of the pier is "70 feet wide," or (exhibit #4), 50 feet wide. In the proposal the city indicates no entrance fee will be required to enter the park. Does this include access to the pier as well? If so, how will money to maintain and staff the facility be provided? Finally, it would be useful if the exact proposed location of the new pier was platted-in on exhibit #3.

## **C. Project Budget**

### **1. Is the budget realistic and reasonable for 1) the size and type of project proposed; 2) the number of people likely to benefit; and, 3) the area benefiting from the project considering the area's number of saltwater fishermen and license sales?**

The total cost of this project is large but the request from the RFAB is less than 20% of the overall cost and, given the number of "users," seems very reasonable. The number of anglers likely to benefit from this project is considerable plus this project provides access to several types of fish not typically available to shorebound anglers. The old Buckroe Pier and the Grandview Pier (both of which were destroyed by Hurricane Isabel) were proven fishing destinations for saltwater anglers not living in the immediate area, so the impact to the saltwater fishing community of this project extends beyond the City of Hampton.

### **2. What is the local commitment to the project (cost sharing, future management and maintenance, in-kind commitments of personnel, etc.)?**

Considerable. The RFAB contribution is less than 20% of the total cost of the project.

**D. Provide an overall evaluation of the project, including a numerical ranking of the project on the "SCORE" scale provided.**

Beach/shore/pier access is in high demand by the saltwater angling community and this project will provide both ample access and the potential for a high quality angling experience. There is very strong public support for this project—both from the local community and well outside the boundaries of the City of Hampton. Excellent project but could have been improved by providing additional details on the budget, site configuration and the actual construction of the pier.

<b>SCORE (Circle One)</b>	<b>Poor</b>					<b>Fair</b>					<b>Excellent</b>
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	<del>9</del>	10